

76-1980/1

Final Report

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Review Staff: 76-0395  
26 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM :   
Chief, Review Staff

SUBJECT : Status of the Final Report of the Senate  
Select Committee on Intelligence

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This memorandum is for your information and possible use in discussions with other Administration officials.

The Senate Select Committee (SSC) final report is scheduled for public release on Monday, 26 April at 1800 hours. It will consist of two major sections -- foreign and domestic -- with each section containing findings and recommendations and lengthy backup papers intended to support the findings and recommendation.

We have been told that the event will take place with a minimum of public relations fanfare, but I believe it will be too difficult for some of the staff and members of the SSC to resist the temptation to take a few parting shots at the Agency. Senator Church succumbed to the temptation in a nationwide television appearance on 19 April. (see copy of his address at Tab A). Nevertheless, I would urge that spokesmen for the Executive Branch be cautioned to exercise restraint in commenting upon the SSC report or reacting to critical congressional statements on the subject. To do otherwise would merely cause the issuance of the SSC report to become a greater news event than is now the case. Moreover, any comments on the SSC report from the Executive Branch at this time should take into account that the Senate on 6 May will be debating and voting upon several different resolutions providing for the establishment of a new Congressional oversight committee for the CIA and other elements of the intelligence community. It would be unfortunate if statements were made now which could adversely affect the votes of

senators on a subject of lasting importance to the CIA.

While the SSC report as published is a considerable improvement in content and security over earlier drafts, the fact remains that the cumulative effect of the report will be to cause serious and long term damage to CIA's foreign intelligence mission at home and abroad and to American foreign policy generally. This is not because there are any new dramatic revelations or embarrassing exposures in the report but because it contains a wealth of detail on doctrine, practices and objectives of CIA's intelligence mission, particularly in the area of clandestine operations. Thus, in the aggregate, the SSC report represents an unprecedented official verification by the United States Senate that this nation, as an act of policy, interferes in and breaks the laws of other countries, and does so with the specific authorization of the President and the Congress.

Abroad, friends and third world neutrals alike will hold this country up to ridicule and perhaps feel compelled, for internal political reasons, to harass local CIA stations. Foreign liaison services and clandestine agents will have additional reason to question the ability of CIA to protect its secrets and its relationships with them. For the price of a copy of the SSC report, our adversaries will be presented with new and authentic insights which may permit their security services to monitor and neutralize CIA operations. In addition, our adversaries will be provided with a bottomless reservoir of material for worldwide anti-American propaganda and political exploitation.

The most obvious and immediate repercussions are likely to result from the publication of those sections of the report which deal with covert action and the domestic impact of foreign clandestine intelligence operations. Tab B contains papers which provide some details on the covert action issue. The publicity given to covert action in the SSC report coupled with the existing elaborate and extensive oversight system required by the Hughes-Ryan Amendment probably means that for the foreseeable future it will be extremely hazardous for the U.S. Government to undertake any new covert action programs. The memoranda at Tab C provide details on the damage that will be caused by the publication of the sections of the report dealing with the domestic impact of foreign clandestine intelligence operations, specifically on CIA relations with American institutions and

private citizens. As previously discussed with you, there is a real danger that the publication of the report will trigger new campus witchhunts by extremist elements on American college campuses and force college administrators out of self-defense to react against those on the campuses who are inclined to cooperate with CIA. If this occurs, a valuable source of information and foreign student recruitments will be lost to the Agency.

With regard to the thrust of the SSC report, one must conclude that it seeks to establish a new morality for the intelligence community by means of new statutes, regulations, and oversight. To accomplish this otherwise worthy objective, the authors of the report have had to resort to squeezing the facts out of shape and reaching erroneous conclusions on the basis of scant or selective evidence which is further distorted by doctrinaire political outlooks. What emerges is a document which

- lacks historical perspective by judging CIA actions of past decades in the light of current events and priorities.

- condemns the CIA for actions taken when in fact the SSC disagreement is with the policies of past administrations.

- grossly exaggerates past or potential improprieties in order to support recommendations that would restrict certain activities such as CIA relations with the American academic community.

- uses excessive amounts of historical detail on CIA activities, most of which were terminated years ago, in order to justify recommendations which would further restrict CIA operations in the future.

- fails to take any serious interest in measures that would improve the quality and performance of the intelligence community.

- calls for oversight structure and procedures in which oversight becomes "overkill".

- will cause a new wave of Freedom of Information Act demands on the Agency.

There may well be some surprises and unpleasant publicity in store for us when the SSC report reaches the press. Separate views of certain individual senators may be more critical of the Agency than the report itself. Press releases and press conferences by individual members of the SSC may include some headline-grabbing criticisms of CIA. Journalists and editorialists will have a field day moralizing over the alleged past misdeeds of CIA. But this too will pass.

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